

What is claimed is:

1. A laminate comprising multiple layers of paper having been impregnated with a polymeric resin and pressed together under high pressure and high temperature to cure the resin, followed by preconditioning the laminate by subjecting the laminate to a first humidity of greater than about 65% and a temperature of from about 32°C to about 45°C, and then drying the laminate before exposure to ambient conditions wherein said laminate is characterized by a reduced shrinkage in the laminate cross direction and machine direction upon subsequent exposure to cyclical humidity variations as compared to a laminate manufactured in the absence of the preconditioning.
2. The laminate of claim 1 wherein the exposure to ambient conditions occurs for a period greater than 24 hours at atmospheric pressure.
3. The laminate of claim 2 wherein the exposure occurs for a period greater than 48 hours at atmospheric pressure.
4. The laminate of claim 1 wherein the humidity is greater than 75% and the temperature is from about 36°C to about 40°C.
5. The laminate of claim 4 wherein the humidity is greater than 90% and the temperature is about 38°C.

6. The laminate of claim 1 wherein the laminate is selected from the group of laminates consisting of industrial and decorative laminates.
7. The laminate of claim 6 wherein a topmost layered sheet is a decorative sheet and the laminate is a decorative laminate.
8. The laminate of claim 6 wherein the laminate is an industrial laminate.
9. The laminate of claim 1 wherein the reduction in shrinkage is at least 30%.
10. The laminate of claim 9 wherein the reduction in shrinkage is at least 50%.
11. A method for manufacturing a laminate comprising the steps of:
 - (a) impregnating multiple layers of paper with a polymeric resin;
 - (b) pressing said layers together under high pressure and high temperature to cure the resin and form the laminate; and
 - (c) preconditioning the laminate by subjecting the laminate to a humidity of greater than about 65% and a temperature of from about 32°C to about 45°C, followed by drying the laminate before exposure.
12. The method of claim 11 wherein the exposure to ambient conditions occurs for a period greater than 24 hours at atmospheric pressure.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the exposure occurs for a period greater than 48 hours at atmospheric pressure.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein the humidity is greater than 75% and the temperature is from about 36°C to about 40°C.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the humidity is greater than 90% and the temperature is about 38°C.

16. The method of claim 11 wherein the laminate is selected from the group of laminates consisting of industrial and decorative laminates.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein a topmost layered sheet is a decorative sheet and the laminate is a decorative laminate.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the laminate is an industrial laminate

19. The laminate of claim 11 wherein the reduction in shrinkage is at least 30%.

20. The laminate of claim 19 wherein the reduction in shrinkage is at least 50%.